

funds that will be reallocated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They will assist in the buyout and relocation of homes located in floodplains that remain vulnerable to future floods.

Additionally, I continue to urge Congress to fully fund my request for SBA's disaster loan program that can help families and small businesses rebuild in the wake of hurricanes and other natural disasters. I have already asked Congress to provide \$500 million that will help farmers in New Jersey and other States who have suffered severe crop losses due to drought and flooding. I urge Congress to meet my requests to help alleviate the suffering of those affected by Hurricane Floyd.

### **Statement on the Death of Daisy Bates**

*November 4, 1999*

Hillary and I were very saddened to hear of Daisy Bates' death this morning. She was a dear friend and a heroine. She was known chiefly as a leader during the crisis of Central High School in 1957 and a mentor to the Little Rock Nine. But she was so much more.

President Kennedy so admired her for her civil rights work that he hired her to work in his administration. During her 84 years, she received over 200 awards for her civil rights work, including the NAACP's esteemed Spingarn Award. In 1957, the Associated Press named her one of the top nine news personalities in the world.

We were blessed to have Daisy as a citizen of Arkansas, where she and her husband, L.C., published the award-winning Arkansas State Press newspaper. For over 30 years, it was the only African-American newspaper in the State. Her death will leave a vacuum in the civil rights community, the State of Arkansas, and our country. Her legacy will live on through the work she did, the friends she made, and the people she touched.

### **Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Reform the Nation's Financial System**

*November 4, 1999*

I am pleased by the overwhelming, bipartisan passage of historic financial services legislation by the Senate today. I hope the House will do the same shortly and send it to me for my signature.

This legislation will help the American financial services system play a leading role in propelling our economy into the 21st century, continuing the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history. Eliminating barriers to financial services competition will allow American companies to better compete in the global economy. And consumers will benefit from greater choice of services at lower costs.

By preserving the Community Reinvestment Act and protecting consumer privacy, we have ensured that all Americans will benefit from this historic legislation.

Even after enactment, our work in the financial services area, particularly with respect to financial privacy and consumer protection, will continue. But today's action by the Senate is a historic step forward for our economy.

### **Statement on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000**

*November 4, 1999*

I have signed into law H.R. 2561, the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000." The bill approves funds to cover the Department's most critical needs, consistent with my request that reflected my strong commitment to our Nation's security.

The bill provides funding for all critical Defense activities—pay and other quality of life programs, readiness, and weapons modernization. In particular, the bill fully funds

the key elements of the compensation initiatives I proposed and that were enacted in the FY 2000 Defense Authorization Act, including military retirement reform, pay table reform, and a significant pay increase. It also fully funds my request for training, spare parts, equipment maintenance, and base operations—all items essential to military readiness. I am pleased that the bill restores partial funding for the F-22 fighter aircraft, which is essential to guaranteeing early air dominance in any future conflict.

Regrettably, the bill goes beyond what is necessary, providing funding for a host of unrequested programs at the expense of other core government activities. It provides \$267.4 billion in discretionary budget authority, a funding level that is \$4.5 billion above my request. As testified to by our military chiefs, my budget request correctly addressed our most important FY 2000 military needs. Unfortunately, H.R. 2561 resorts to a number of funding techniques and gimmicks to meet the Appropriations Subcommittee allocation. These include: designating \$7.2 billion of standard operation and maintenance funding as a contingent emergency; deferring payments to contractors until FY 2001; and incrementally funding a Navy ship (LHD-8).

Furthermore, the bill contains several objectionable language provisions. I am concerned about section 8074, which contains certain reporting requirements that could materially interfere with or impede this country's ability to provide necessary support to another nation or international organization in connection with peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance activities otherwise authorized by law. I will interpret this provision consistent with my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and my responsibilities as Commander in Chief.

While I am troubled by a provision requiring the Department of Defense to seek specific authorization for the payment of fines or penalties for environmental violations, I will direct the Department to seek such authorization on any fine or penalty it receives, ensuring full accountability for all such violations.

Furthermore, while the provision in section 8174 of the bill prohibits the Department from contributing funds to the American Heritage Rivers initiative, I will direct the Department, within existing laws and authorities, to continue to support and undertake community-oriented service or environmental projects on rivers I have recognized as part of the initiative.

Finally, the bill provides only about one-quarter of the funding level requested for construction of Forward Operating Locations that would reestablish regional drug interdiction capabilities in Latin America. This amount will not adequately support our vital drug interdiction efforts in the Western Hemisphere.

I have signed this bill because, on balance, it demonstrates our commitment to the military, meets our obligations to the troops, maintains readiness, and funds modernization efforts that will ensure our technological edge into the 21st century.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
November 4, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2561, approved November 4, was assigned Public Law No. 106-79.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders on Minimum Wage Legislation**

*November 4, 1999*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing this letter to encourage you to pass a straightforward minimum wage bill that gives working Americans the pay raise they deserve. If we value work and family, we should raise the value of the minimum wage.

In 1996, the Congress and I worked together to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents over 2 years. Since then, the American economy has created nearly 9 million new jobs—with more than 1 million of them in the retail sector where many minimum-wage workers are employed. The unemployment rate has fallen from the already low rate of 5.2 percent to 4.2 percent—the lowest in 29 years. We have enjoyed larger real wage increases for more consecutive years than at